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Chief, Contact Division Attn: Dupport Branch (Crowley)

Chief, Washington Office

Interview with AFEC Committee

- 1. At the request of Mr. Ashcraft for Scichaft, WH Division, Frenk Sheridan interviewed the committee for AFEC at the Washington Field Office on 24 March 1961. They consisted of Abel Mestre. Victor Pedroso, Silvio Samabria, Leslie Pantin, Carlos Garcia del Tran, and Faul Scilman. Mestre stated that the organization van founded about June 1960 in Mismi as a clandestine spolitical group with the objective to overthrow Castro, to make the various Cuben exile groups and to create laws for the effective reconstruction of Cuba. Membership is comprised of individual businessmen rather than representatives of large organizations.
- 2. The consittee had been meeting with various United States officials in Mashington, D. C., to express its views. Its members are worried over Cestro propagands, which, although untrue, has been accepted as fact, i.e., twenty thousand killings by Batista and the claim that Castro's was a social revolution rather than a political one. They pointed out that the Cuban economy was formerly prospering with an enlarging middle class, so that the term social revolution has been used by Castro primarily to promote letist measures. In addition, labor legislation was in effect which actually put employers at a disadventage with employees, expered to the other countries of Letin America. The problem facing Outen labor was primarily the seasonal one crop economy. Now the people have less pay, less commodities available, no claims against snyone and merely work for a Castro-Communist government. The farmer has not been helped by agrarian reform, but has been obliged to enter comparatives or to sell his crops at controlled prices, which are paid when and how the government pleases. This is merely an imitation of what Castro promised.
- 3. The committee feels that apporture of the revolution actually were seeking honesty in government and the liberty outlined in the 1940 constitution. In this regard, the members feel that the Commists may try for a second round in any povernment replacing Costro. Such an interim regime must develop careful measures to promote true democratic elections. This government may include covert Commists who would be a constant threst. For this reason, it was emphasized and re-emphasized that the exile leaders be most carefully screened by the United States before their return to Cuba.

A. A major concern has been unification of the various exiled factions. This has now started, but the committee feels that businessmen such as they represent should be proportionately represented in any new government during the masters period of reconstruction. They believe that no lefists of any shade should be included in the provisional government. Tuniness representatives of the economic classes should perticipate for the first time in Cuban politics and should be consulted at all stagms.

- but is a Communist springhourd against the United States. They urged that the United States to what they, the businesseen, failed to do in Cuba to take the officers. Developments in Cuba have followed the Classic Communist techniques, so that it should not be difficult to enticipate future naves. United States propagands must be overhauled. It should be less passive and more effectively aggressive. To date, propagands has been the Communist' most effective vempon and the inited States has lost to the point that it is threatened by a serious loss of respect in latin America. Although it has long been the basic ideal modal, some latins are beginning to wonder whether they are right about the United States and whether they should witch mides. Fidel Castro won his revolution by propagands and not by arms.
- 6. The primary coury of the consisted scene to be the leftet cricotation of leaders who have taken over the government in exile during recent days. They explanated that Oute needs a democratic government and they feer a tyroniny of the right or the left. The United States must realise that some of the exile leaders participated and injecture in the Court government and might try to continue must of the bad aspects of the Castro program.
- 7. Silvio Samebria commented that, although CIA appeared to be in touch with all of the other Cuban groups, no one had approached his organization to essist or to learn what it was doing. The whole committee offered to be of any possible assistance to CIA at any time. No effort was such to sull information or funds from CIA during this session.

F. J. Staridon

Anchoeures: 3 AFEC documents

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